3: Stanonus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7



or after the return to the village. The boys often wear all their beadwork and new cloth for several days; after carrying their *ngongo* for a similar period, they give them up to their *alamusi*. Together they go into the bush where they break up their wands and put them either into a pit or in the forked branch of a tree. Before the *m'wichila* leaves, he brings to the chief all his takings and these are divided between them.

Mention has been made above of the *isyago* and it now remains to consider these more fully. The figures vary in subject, in number and in arrangement. At the ceremony at Kuninama's, the following were arranged in a long line beginning with the whale and ending with the python before *ching'undang'ungu* (Pl. X, fig. 2).

1. *Nalumpumi*.....the whale (Pl. XI, fig. 7).
2. *Nyoma*.....the crocodile (Pl. XII, fig. 1).
3. *Chimi*.....the leopard (Pl. XII, fig. 3).
4. *Mbanda*.....the zebra (Pl. X, fig. 6).
5. *Ngulu*.....the scaly anteater (Pl. XII, fig. 2).
6. *Nkamanda*.....the hippopotamus (Pl. XII, fig. 4).
7. *Kanga* (*nakanga ?*).....(Pl. X, fig. 5).
8. *Mbalagi*.....the sable antelope (Pl. XI, fig. 3).
9. *Wakwapwa wa chilawa-kalala*.....the woman dead in child-birth (Pl. XIII, fig. 2).
10. *Ligwesa*.....the sun (Pl. XI, fig. 4).
11. *Likokola*.....the scorpion (Pl. XII, fig. 6).
12. *Mbale*.....the plate (Pl. XI, fig. 6).
13. *Likwamamba*.....a kind of cloth (Pl. XI, fig. 5).
14. *Njoni*.....the lightning-lizard (Pl. XIII, fig. 4).
15. *Sokota*.....the iguana (Pl. XII, fig. 5).
16. *M'undu*.....the man (Pl. XIII, fig. 1).
17. *Ligulwesa*.....the wild pig (Pl. XI, fig. 1).
18. *Sungulu*.....the hare (Pl. XI, fig. 2).
19. *Sato*.....the python (Pl. XIII, fig. 3).

Beside these, *Nyasa*, the lake, nearly always appears;[1] *Mwesi*, the moon, the drunken woman, and certain animals may be represented, and in addition, *chisaka*, "the dwelling place of all the old spirits." Each particular *m'wichila* has his favorite figures about which he sings, always commencing, however, with the whale.

Reproduced here is the series of *isyago* at Kuninama's village sketched at the time of my visit. It seems probable that originally the same set of figures was always reproduced. It is hard to trace their significance with any certainty. Natives aver that they are made only for instructional purposes. "The animals are made so that the boys may recognise them, while some of the other figures have reference to customs." They deny the more in-

[1] Cf. Stannus and Duparq, 'The initiation ceremony for boys among the Yao of Nyasaland,' op. cit., Pl. III, fig. 3.

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7



●778
825

teresting possibility of a totemic origin and it is, of course, true that at the present time the Yao have few clan names referring to animals and practically no clan food taboo.

At Mkangula's village in September 1913, I saw the *inyago* figures being made. The long grass was cleared away and the earth hoed up into heaps, roughly of the shape and size of the figures to be made. A number of women were employed carrying water from the stream with which the mounds were well moistened and moulded into more definite form. The outlines of the figures were then drawn in, all by one oldish man, with flour smeared on by hand. In drawing *nalumgumi*, it was interesting to note how the efforts to keep to symmetry failed.

Of *nguwa*, *chisi*, *ngaba*, *ndomondo*, *mbalapi*, *nakata*, *liguluwa*, *nato*, I have little to add; the *wali* are told of their habits, whether they are good to eat, whether they are dangerous, etc.; and all the stories about them. *Mbunda*, the zebra, is always represented in duplicate for some unknown reason. *Sungula* is pointed out in reference to a story the boys have been told at *Ndapala*, namely, that the hare is good to eat but they must not eat it till after they are married and their wives have borne children; otherwise they will be childless. The superstitition regarding the hare is mentioned elsewhere. *Njasi* is the hypothetical lizard-like animal which lives above the clouds and is seen as lightning. *Likesiambo* is a cloth which the Yao used to wear. In the presence of his chief, a man must not throw a fold over his shoulder. *Mbale*, the plate, refers to the chief's plate from which he eats. *Likoloto*: It is said that the old people used to eat scorpions and the people of Mangoche, Amangoche Yao, used to call the Amachinga Yao the "*Makoloto* eaters." *Lyuwa* is the sun, the giver of daytime. *Wakongwe* is a representation of a pregnant woman who has died undelivered because her husband was unfaithful. This is a well recognised superstition and one among others of equal moral value, inculcated into the youths during their stay at *Ndapala*. Though rough, *wakongwe* is a very realistic figure. The woman is evidently lying down, as one hand supports the head, the other hand grasps the thigh as if she were in pain; the breasts are made large and the figure being in relief, the prominent abdomen, and expanded umbilicus are noticeable features. The face and pudenda are modelled in clay and superimposed on the earth figure; a maize cob stalk is placed in the nose to counterpart the nose-button worn by women.

In contradiction to *wakongwe*, *mundu* is symbolic of the man who has led a proper life and is blessed with a child. The child is shown on one side. On his other side is seen a conventional illustration of a spear, possibly to indicate that the figure is that of a man. I am not very sure about *Kanga*; it may be meant for *nakanga*, the woman who officiates at *Litiso*; there is nothing about the figure to suggest a woman and I could learn nothing concerning it.

*Nalumgumi*: There appears to be some difference of opinion about this animal. Formerly I accepted the translation given by Scott,[1] namely, the whale. Others have supposed

[1] David Clement Scott, 'A syllabaric dictionary of the Mang'anja Language,' Edinburgh, 1892, p. 421.

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7



that the word refers to some large animal which lived or may still live in the big lakes. The older natives say of *nalumgumi* that "it lived in the big sea at Zanzibar. It would come and lie on the surface of the water, maybe near a village; then the people would go down and cut lumps of meat off without its knowledge; the wounds healed up immediately. Meat from different parts differed; some was nasty to taste. It was a very large animal indeed and never lived in the lakes." They distinguish it from *lipoto* of the Anyanja which was "bigger than a hippopotamus but not so big as *nalumgumi*, lived in the lakes of Nyasaland, in the deep parts as at Tunde on Lake Chilwa; was very fierce and killed the hippopotamus; would upset canoes. There are no more *lipoto* but probably there might be." One of my informants, a man of forty, said his father had been told of them by his father, but he had never seen them. At the present time, other natives say that the *nalumgumi* used to live in the lakes but they seem really to refer to *lipoto* and I think looseness of speech only accounts for the idea that the word refers to anything but the whale. Hetherwick translates *nalumgumi* as a large fish figuring in the initiation ceremonies,[1] a poor description, since it always has four limbs. The word *nalumgumi* meaning a whale, occurs among the Mchiwambo people who live at Quilimane. These people do not make any figures on the ground at their circumcision ceremonies but it is interesting to note that their *wali* carry staffs similar to the *mpango* on their return to the village. I think, therefore, there can be little doubt that the word refers to the whale which was probably well known to the Yao before they migrated so far inland as Nyasaland. Whether the word was adopted or not in these parts in the past and used for some indigenous animal now extinct, one cannot be quite sure, but I think it is improbable; I believe the confusion with *lipoto* is of quite recent date. *Lipoto* itself appears to have been some large mammal of the hippopotamus type, extinct probably for some time. The stories of *lipoto* resemble those of the monster of Lake Ngami and are not without interest. The most weighty evidence against the animal now depicted at the *Unpango* and called *nalumgumi* being a whale, is found in the representations themselves. It has a neck with a knob at the junction of the head with the body and a second knob at the junction of the body, tail and hind limbs; the tail is well marked. The "webbing" between the limbs is, I think, a means of finishing the figure and is not supposed to represent some anatomical feature of the beast. The same is, I think, true of the markings, lines, dots, etc., which are purely decorative. Reference has already been made to its tusks. The little mounds on either side of the body of the animal, on one side within the "webbing," are spoken of as the "little hills" and are not suggested breasts as one might imagine. The hollows have no significance according to my informers except that they are where the *m'michila* stands; the mark which looks like a native hoe, I believe, is meant to represent the hoe which has been used in making the figures.

*Chinpasa*, the lake: the photograph in the article by Dr. Davey and myself of *Npasa*[2]

[1] Op. cit., p. 330. [2] Op. cit., Pl. III, fig. 2.

3: Stanmus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7



gives an excellent idea of the average figure; it is circular in plan, often with a little hillock in the centre known as *katumbi kampanji*, "the hill of debt," and disposed in the quadrants are four depressions.

When the *usili* are introduced to *Chinguas*, they stand round in a circle while the *m'michilo* stands in one of the depressions with perhaps two of his assistants in others. The *m'michilo* sings:

"*Nyasa kunyanyala chinyanyasile mwamaka ninganzile kwilambo, amai!*
"The lake enormous was I born child I would have died on the plain, mother!"
*Ninganzile ninganzile!*"

or

"I have lived by the great lake all my life; I should have died in the plains."

while all three make movements as of paddling a canoe. The depressions are said to represent canoes. I believe this is the recognised form but I have also seen an oblong figure with two outlines of unmistakable canoes. *Chinguas* is usually found near *nahunguwi*.

*Chiuta*, when represented, stands beyond *mbanda*. It consists of two trenches at right angles forming a cross, which are covered over with logs and earth and the whole outlined with flour in a decorative pattern. The end of one limb of the cross is left open and round this opening a screen of grass is made. As the *usili* approach *Chiuta*, some of the assistants or *akawusi* descend into the trenches for the ceremony. The *m'michilo* takes up his stand at the centre of the cross and sings:

"*Chiuta, amao, kwakala chiuta!*"
"*Chiuta, mother, come see chiuta!*"

Then as everyone says "Listen, listen!" crying is heard "coming out of the bowels of the earth," followed by drumming and the singing of the *chindimba* songs (sometimes *mbanda* or *masche*); a horn is sometimes heard as well as *kululuta*, trilling with the tongue against the lips. *Chiuta* is called "the resting place of all departed spirits" and the sounds are said to be the echoes of their doings. The word is not met with elsewhere among the Yao, although it occurs in the Chinyanja and in other languages of this country with the meaning "the heavens."

*Chiuta* is said by Hetherwick[1] to be "a large fish that forms one of the pictures at the *Unyago*," but I have never seen it or heard of it, and I am doubtful of the correctness of the statement.

*Ching'undang'unda:* Dr. Davey's photograph[2] is an excellent reproduction of this figure, which consists of a mound of earth flattened on the top, and decorated with geometric patterns in flour which extend to the ground. In the centre and at the four corners, so to speak, are implanted billets of wood with decorative lines and dots in black and red on the white wood (Pl. X, figs. 1, 2). The billets are three inches in diameter and project twelve to fifteen inches above the ground.

[1] Handbook of the Yao language, op. cit., p. 142. [2] Op. cit., Pl. III, fig. 2.

The actual meaning of this figure it is very difficult to ascertain. It may be referred to as "the little hill of debt" signifying, I believe, an idea that everyone owes a debt to his *Unpilipe*, to his progenitors, and to his own future progeny. It is the spot where medicine has been buried to insure the *Unyago* success, and may be looked upon as the keystone of the ceremonies which take place at *Lupanda*. The derivation of the word is probably from *ku-ulipa*, "to heap up earth into a mound," or maybe from *ku-unda*, "to teach children manners," but it is uncertain as the word is variously spelled; the spelling I have given follows the pronunciation of the old people. 778

*Lupanda:* This consists of a mound of earth closely resembling *ching'undung'unda* in shape and decoration with similar wooden billets at the base, while on the top is often planted a branch from a tree (Pl. X, figs. 3, 4). The word is derived from the verb *ku-panda*, "to plant" and signifies the place which the *m'wichila* marks for the ceremonies to take place.

Reference has already been made to the assistants of the *m'wichila*. The chief assistant has been already mentioned; some three or four others who aid him are friends of the *m'wichila* from his own village. They participate at the essential moments of the ceremonies, singing, drumming, or dancing, and together with some of the *akamasi*, take part in *chiuta*. Beside these, there are regular bands of trained drummers and dancers who attend *Lupanda* and dance in the village in the morning and at *Lupanda* in the afternoon of the day of return. They usually dance *chumbo* and *sonjo*. They are men who come for the fun of the thing and, of course, may gain a good deal from presents. On so important an occasion, there is much criticism of their performance. Should one of them not dance well enough to please the old people, they may call out, "Pluck off his feathers!" and the unlucky fellow has all his dancing kit and any clothes beside stripped off and he is driven forth naked, the laughing stock of the crowd. 881

*Chiputu:* The initiation ceremony for girls is on lines very similar to the boys' ceremony. The age at which the girls take part is from about ten to fourteen years, though lately they have been much younger on the whole, in consequence of the older people's wishes that their children shall benefit from its instruction before they come under civilising influences and the recently introduced mission teaching.

When a number of girls have reached the proper age in a village or group of villages, as with the boys, the chief is approached and he arranges a date for the ceremony during the same season as *Lupanda* and for similar reasons.

The woman corresponding to the *m'wichila* who arranges everything is called *mtevesi*. Each girl *msuli* about to be initiated is looked after by a woman, her *mkamasi*.

The girls, their guardians, and the mistress of the ceremonies, together with the inhabitants of the villages adjourn, as in the case of *Lupanda*, to a spot some little distance from the main village, called *Chiputu*. Here grass shelters have been erected beforehand and food has been collected.

3: Stanmus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7



There has never been any shortage of land and therefore the plotting out of gardens was a matter which caused little trouble. A man wishing to make a new garden the next season simply marked the site in the bush by scoring some trees or hoeing around some patches of grass and tying the grass ends into a knot. If anyone else came along and hoed this plot, the man who had marked it out still claimed it and need not pay for the hoeing done. Whenever a man was doubtful about a piece of land, he would ask advice of the headman of the village.

When an abandoned garden had become overgrown, anyone wishing to take it up applied to the headman who sent him to ask the original owners whether they wished to take it up again. The newcomer could take possession only with their permission.

Often if a village were moved, during the first season the people simply put up shelters in their gardens. Later, the site of the village was chosen and around it a medicine man sprinkled medicine to insure happiness and prosperity. The tree from which this medicine was made became sacred to the village and might not be used for firewood, or was subject to any other taboo the medicine man might care to make. He might also say, "In this village there shall be no pounding of grain at night," etc.

If a village were to be built near a spot previously inhabited, medicine and offerings were made to the departed spirits of the former occupants to put them at rest and "open" the place to the newcomers. The beer-pot from the grave of some former chief or headman, who was supposed to have directed the destinies of the old village, was brought to the new location and beer placed in it to insure his continued guidance.

In the case of a village into which a number of men had married, the sponsors of the wives went to the sponsors of the husbands and asked permission to move the village.[1] Later, beer was brewed in the new village and the sponsors invited to come and drink and "put foot in the new village."

Relationship. Family relationship among natives presents certain difficulties to the European accustomed to equivalent relationship of males and females on both sides of the family. In the diagram below (Fig. 1) the relationship of the two children (C 5) will be traced. The mother and father (B 10 and 9) are the *achikulu* and *wese* but are addressed as *amao* and *atati*. The maternal uncles older and younger than the mother (B 11 and 15) are called *akwehewe* and their wives (B 12 and 16) *akwegwe*. The maternal aunts are addressed as *amao*, mother, anyone older than the mother being distinguished as *amao wakulungwe*, "the bigger" (B 13), a younger aunt as *amao wanandi*, "the lesser" (B 17); their respective husbands are addressed *atati*, *atati wakulungwe* (B 14), and *atati wanandi* (B 18). On the father's side the uncles are called *atati wakulungwe* (B 1) and *atati wanandi* (B 5), respectively, for those older and younger than the father, and their wives *amao wakulungwe* (B 2) and *amao wanandi* (B 6). The paternal aunts are called *atati wakungwe* (female uncles) (B 3 and 7), their husbands (B 4 and 8) *atati*.

[1] Vide supra, p. 228.

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7



knees and elbows, at intervals swaying their bodies from side to side and clapping their hands. Kasongo then ordered all to go and bathe, men and women separately. As they returned from the stream, rain began to fall.

Intercession on behalf of the sick may be made, especially by anyone who is likely to be accused of causing the illness by witchcraft.[1] The man standing with arms outstretched, downwards and a little in front of his body, the hands supine, takes some water in his mouth and discharges it in a stream on the ground, (probably as a sign of purification of his tongue), and then invoking "all the spirits above," asks that they will intercede to restore health to the sick man and bear witness to his own innocence of any wish to do the sick man injury. *Ku-pepa* is the word meaning to offer sacrifice and prayer.

Harvesting and hunting are occasions when sacrifices may be offered. It was formerly the custom for the chief to determine the day on which harvesting of millet should begin. On the day appointed, a big drum was beaten in the village and word passed round; then everyone would go down to his garden, gather a head of millet, and bring it back to the village where it was all handed over to the chief's headwife. After drying and threshing, a little of the grain was laid at the grave of an old chief by one of the reigning chief's advisers, the remainder being again distributed to all the people gathered together in the village meeting-place, who ate it raw. After this ceremony, harvesting began.

In passing through a millet garden, if a child asks his mother to give him some to eat, she plucks a bunch or two and reverently laying one at the foot of a *msoro* tree for the spirits or at the base of some other tree, if she cannot see a *msoro*, she gives the rest to the child.

When a hunting expedition makes its first killing, part of the flesh of the animal is laid at the base of a tree as a thank offering to the spirits and in anticipation of further favors to be conferred. All such offerings are supposed by the natives to be partaken of by the spirits, though they are well aware that they do not actually diminish in quantity. There is an interesting point in this connection: any man who has acted as *sibilo* (undertaker) to some well-known man may appropriate these offerings. In the case of the hunting offering, he will run round the tree, saying, "I am a hyaena, the spirits will not mind me," and will then take part of the flesh-offering and eat it.

In the same way, a *sibilo* may drink from a grave beer-pot after three days, when the spirits are supposed to have taken what they want.

With the exception of the *msoro* tree above mentioned (*ndima*, Chin.), and possibly another called *nsilo-nyama* (Chin.), which is never used as firewood and which is supposed to be used by *masoi*, I do not think there are any sacred trees properly so-called. Miss Werner supposes that many of the big trees (often a species of *Ficus*) in villages are sacred.[2] The truth is, I believe, simply that a village is made naturally round a big tree which conveniently offers its shade for the village meeting place. The spirits of deceased chiefs may

[1] Vide supra, p. 307. [2] The natives of British Central Africa, op. cit., p. 62.

824 718 be supposed to live in such trees. They are convenient natural objects for them to occupy, in fact practically the only ones to be found in villages. Trees may secondarily, therefore, be looked upon as in some degree sacred. About such trees strings or pieces of calico may be placed as an offering to the spirits of the departed. But the Yao do not erect little huts in their vicinity, hung about with strips of calico as is the custom among the Anyanja.

775 Macdonald[1] mentions the spirits in connection with Soche and other hills round Blantyre and supposes them to be the spirits of the places themselves. This I think is unlikely; they would probably turn out to be spirits bearing the names of long departed Anyanja chiefs whom the immigrant Amangoche Yao venerated just "to be on the safe side," since they had come and taken the country which long ago belonged to the former tribe. When approaching or passing any spot held to be the dwelling place of spirits, salutation is made by clapping the hands.

[825] Spirits of the departed may enter into animals or may take the form of animals, commonly lions and sometimes large snakes (python), but this belief is not so general among the Yao as among other tribes, in my opinion. An animal which is so possessed is called *liyuka*, from *ku-yuka*, "to be transformed."

[774] Apart from this habitation of inanimate objects above mentioned by *maimu*, there is nothing that points to a belief in Animism among the Yao, so far as I know. Neither hills, rocks, streams, lakes, nor trees have their own spirits, nor are they endowed by the native mind with life.

Deceased persons appear to the living in dreams, the native apparently believing that the deceased appears in his material body.

775 787 791 They believe also in revelation of wishes of the deceased through the medium of the living. The spirit of the deceased is supposed to enter into the medium. The medium, I am informed, is always a woman, never a man. From the descriptions of some of these revelation séances, there can be no doubt that they are manifestations of *la grande hystérie*. The medium works herself up into a frenzy of excitement and in her delirium gives out the name of the deceased, the voice which speaks being that of the spirit within her. She rolls on the ground and foams at the mouth, uttering the word of revelation which is generally to the effect that some deceased chief's spirit is feeling aggrieved at the neglect of his tomb; the voice may go on to say that certain practices are forbidden, or demand that certain rites be observed by the people. The spirits which possess her are generally spoken of as *msoka*, a word which, though sometimes used as equivalent to *maimu*, usually seems to

[158] have rather a sinister significance. Insane persons are called *msoka* and are thought to be possessed by a spirit, and vapor baths with exorcism may be practiced for their cure. In the case of the death of anyone who is possessed, in answer to my interrogation, I have

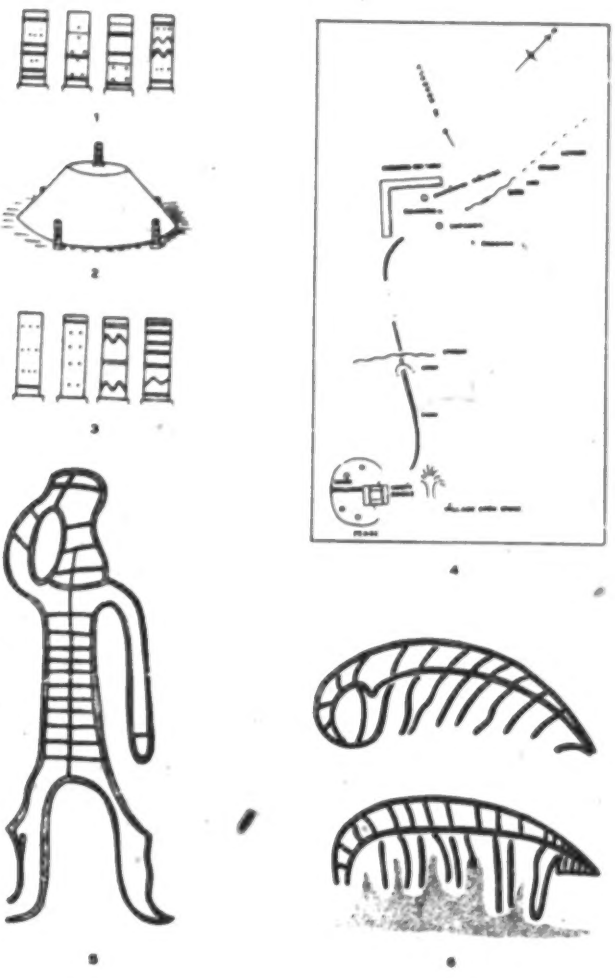
[761] been told that both the spirit which has entered into the man and his own *maimu* leave his body.

[1] Op. cit., vol. 1, p. 70.

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7



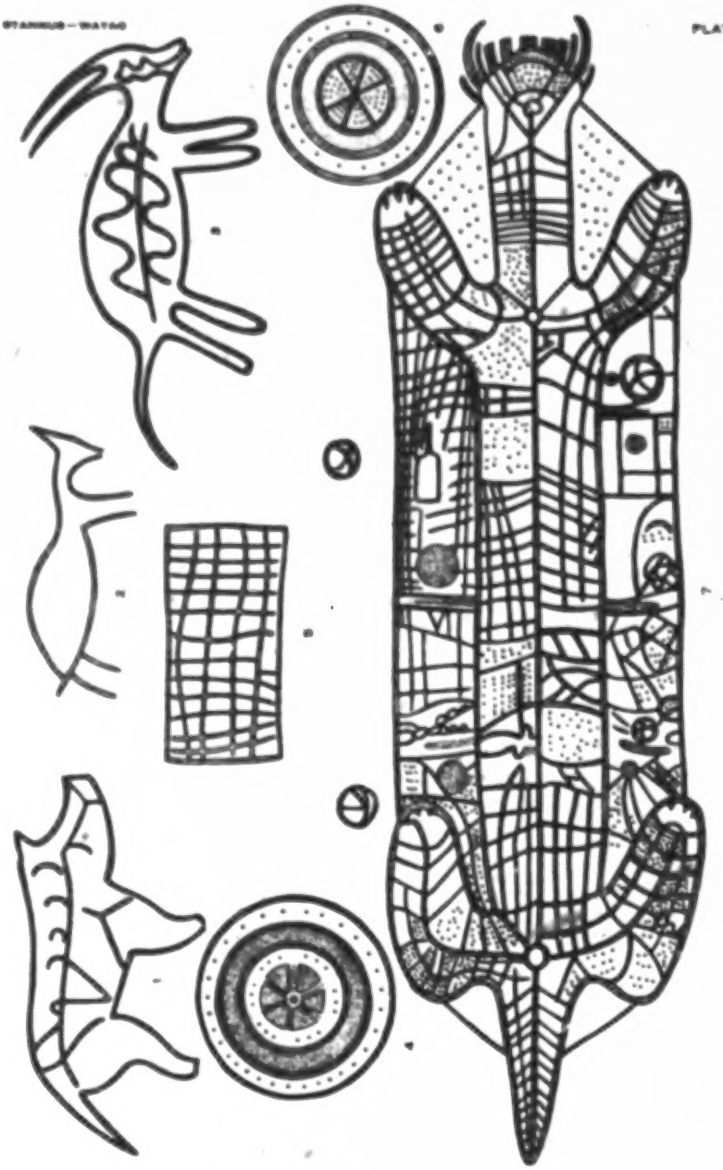
1778
825
532
[361]



1-2. CRUDE TERRACOTTAS. 3. APPARU POTS. 4. SKETCH PLAN OF APPARU. 5-6. TERRA FIGURES

[End Plate 10]
[Explanation of plates, cat. 116, p. 265]

778
592
825



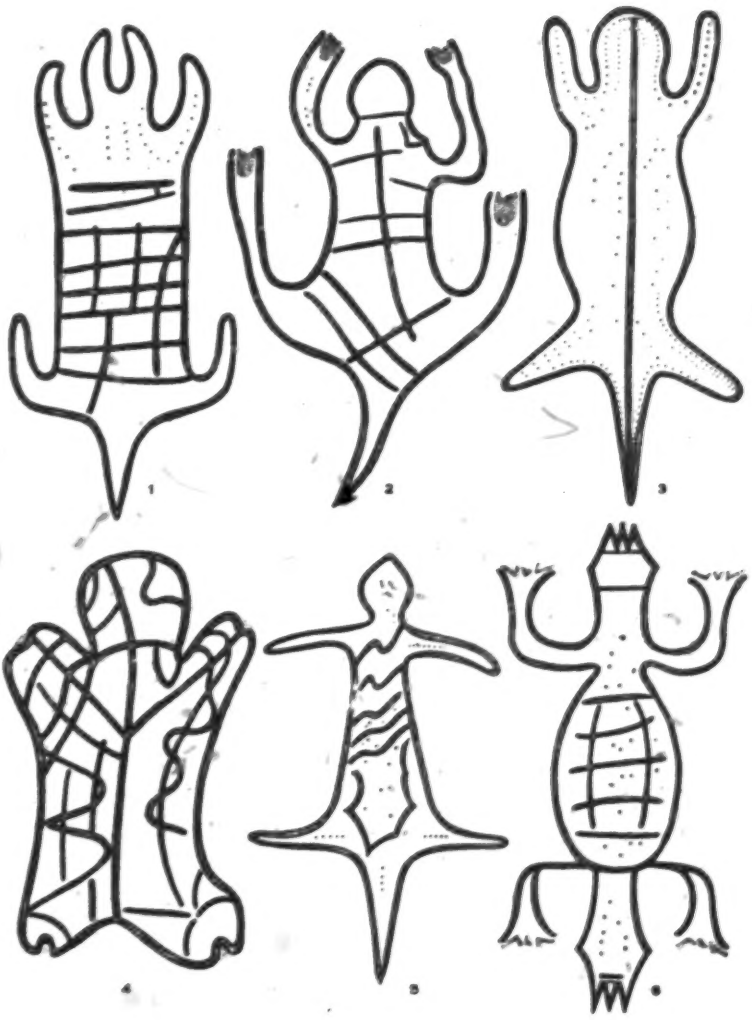
[End Plate 1L]

[For Plate Explanation, see cat. 116, p. 265]

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7



778
825
532

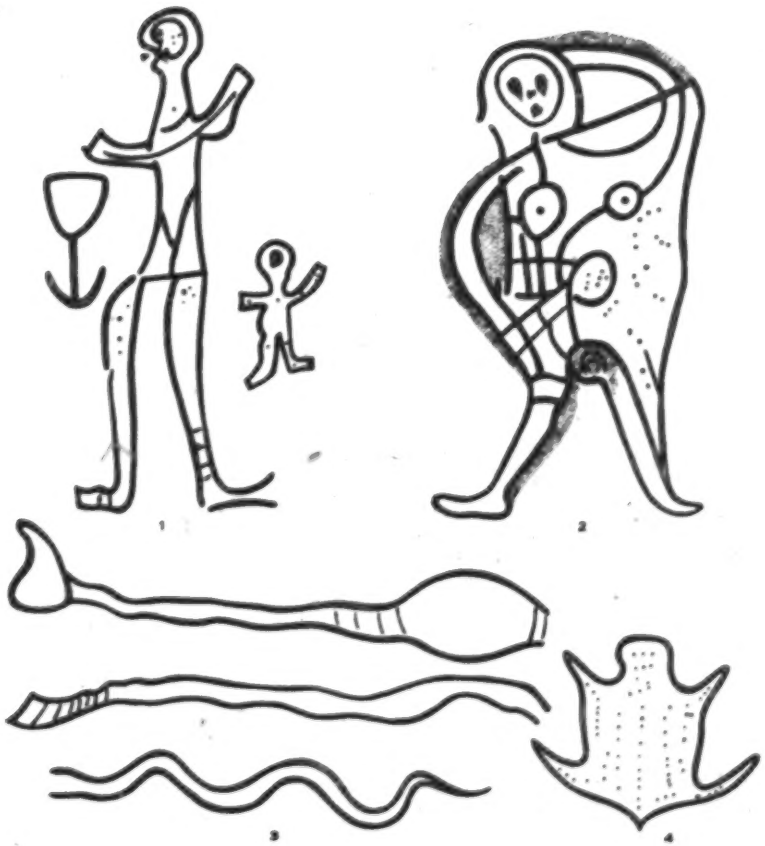


WAYAO FIGURES

[End Plate 12]

[For explanation, see Cat. 116, p. 265]

778
825
532



[End Plate 13]

[For explanation, see cat. 116, p. 265]

7: Hetherwick M-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FT7 Yao FT7



present fortunes. But it is to the human soul after death, when it is considered as having an influence on the lives and fortunes of those it has left behind in the world and consequently as a power to be propitiated and honoured, that the term *mulungu* is more strictly applied. Freed from the body it passes to *mulungu*, and there is regarded as endowed with powers which it never possessed when alive on earth. To pray to such a spirit is described as *kulomba mulungu*, to worship *mulungu*, never *kusopa* in this case. Such *mulungu* worship enters largely into Yao religious or social life. In almost every Yao village there will be found a shrine which is the centre of the worship of the inhabitants. It consists of a carefully built hut enclosed within a strong grass fence or hedge of a species of cactus plant. The hut itself is built of the usual native materials—the walls of wooden posts, bamboos, and strong reed grass bound together with bark-rope and plastered over with clay or stiff mud. The roof is of grass laid on a framework of bamboos, and is generally covered with long stripe of white or coloured calico. On the ridge or apex of the roof are fixed a couple of flags or an umbrella or two. One wall is usually left open so that the interior is easily seen. Within, from the bamboo rafters are suspended handkerchiefs, cloths, bunches of beads, etc., all offerings to the *mulungu* of the dead headman or chief from his friends and relatives. The floor is of clay carefully smeared with sand in native fashion. A raised platform or mound of earth in the centre marks the spot where the grave was made. The *awilo* or officials who preside at the funeral obsequies, first dug for about 8 or 10 feet down in a perpendicular direction, and then on the western side of this well they hollowed out a shallow cave in the earth. In this the body was placed, laid on its side with the knees bent up under the chin, and the face turned towards the east. Various articles of personal property were next placed beside the corpse, clothes, ivory, guns, axes, hoes, etc., and the mouth of the cave closed up with woolen posts and a strong reed mat. The grave was then filled in and the surface carefully finished as we have seen. At the head of the mound a native pot was fixed in the ground for the reception of the offering of beer which is an almost invariable accompaniment of any act of worship paid to the *mulungu* of the dead.

Such a shrine marks the grave of almost every Yao chief or headman, and is regarded as the abode of his soul or the spot where his *mulungu* is most accessible. If his successor is about to undertake a long journey or enter on any warlike expedition against an enemy or neighbour, he must first *kutopa mbepesi*, place an offering here to secure the favour and assistance of the *mulungu* of the dead. Should a long-continued drought endanger the prospects of the grain crop, the departed chief must be solicited to send the lacking rain. A feast is first prepared, almost always of beer, sometimes with the addition of native porridge, fowl, or game. The worshippers gather round the shrine bringing part of the food which they have prepared. Their priest for the occasion is the successor of the dead chief, sometimes one or other of the *awilo* who placed the body in the grave, or it may be that any other near relation of the dead man is chosen to represent the people and act as their spokesman. The nearer the relationship the more influence will he have with the dead.

7: Hetherwick M-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FT7 Yao FT7



with the dead. He approaches the shrine, opens the gate of the fence, takes a potful of beer and pours it into the pot at the head of the grave. Next he places the basket of porridge and the plate of meat on the mound beside it and retires. Kneeling down outside the gate facing the shrine and a few yards in front of the people he chants his prayer in a monotone, each petition commencing with "Chonde, chonde," "Please, please." All the while the people clap their hands in unison with him and sing the response as they do in a native case in the chief's court.

When the offering has been made at the grave, the rest of the beer or other food is consumed by the worshippers. Guns are fired as a token of respect to the dead, and the rest of the day is spent in dancing.

Such shrines are to be seen in almost every Yao village where the inhabitants have been located for any length of time. They are regarded with awe—the little boys as they pass whisper to each other in a warning tone, "masoka." Should the village be moved to any other district, the old shrine is not forgotten. Periodical visits are made to it with the usual offerings. In cases where the old home has been occupied by a people hostile to the old inhabitants, such visits are usually made during the night, and the people awake in the morning to find that the old chief's grave in their midst has been newly repaired, and a fresh offering of food placed at its head.

Sometimes such shrines are found on the summits of hills which once may have been a refuge from the enemy in time of war, but which now lie lone and deserted. Thither in their need the people make their way with their offering of food and beer, and their prayer for rain or suitable weather for the crops. Near Blantyre such shrines are to be seen on the tops of Mount Sochi and Mount Michiru. The former is the abode of the spirit of Kankhomba, and the latter of Mpalale, both old Maravi or Mang'anja chiefs who doubtless fled there seeking safety from the war of the invading Yaos, and died leaving their *mzimu* to be the *mulungu* or spirit of the mountain. Some years ago, during the fear of an Angoni invasion, the Yaos of Mount Sochi fled to the hill-top for refuge, and there the old chief Kapeni died. He was buried close to the grave of the old Kankhomba, and now, when the Yaos on Sochi make an offering, it is to the spirit of Kapeni that the homage is paid, and the shrine of Kankhomba lies neglected.

Only the graves of chiefs or headmen are thus treated as shrines of worship. The burying place of slaves and the common people lies away in the thick bush, where only the rank grass or the thicket of old trees marks the spot. No offerings are ever taken there, for such as are buried there can have no influence in the spirit world. The dead are buried, the broken pot or basket is left on the grave to mark the spot, and none ever seek to go there save to lay another in the same neglected ground.

II. But the word *mulungu* is used by the Yao with a wider application. Etymologically the word is connected with the root *kulunguu*, which in so many of the other branches of the Bantu tongue appears as *kulu* or *kuru*, and signifies "great" or "old." It is the same root which appears in the Kaffir word for God,